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ABSTRACT

This document contains three papers from a symposium on work force issues facing human resource development (HRD). "Diversity Management in Nonprofit Women's Health Care Settings: A Qualitative Study of Race, Class, and Gender Influences" (Camille A. Cordak) demonstrates which organizational activities support diversity and how an organization's diversity philosophy affects service delivery. "An Analysis of Diversity Training Provided by Business and Industry" (Rose Mary Wentling) uses a study of companies with exemplary diversity programs to derive criteria for developing work-based learning environments for diverse students. In "The Role of HRD in the Welfare Revolution: Fostering Intergenerational Transformational Learning" (Marsha E. Jackson, Albert K. Wiswell), eight African American women reveal factors relevant to their workplace success and obstacles that slowed their progress. (KC)

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12 **Workforce Issues Facing HRD**
Chair: Kimberly McDonald, Indiana-Purdue University

Employability of Older Workers
Linda Kleijer, University of Twente
Wim J. Nijhof, University of Twente

Diversity Management in Nonprofit Women's Health Care Settings: A Qualitative Study of Race, Class and Gender Influences
Camille A. Cordak, Emory University

An Analysis of Diversity Training Provided by Business and Industry
Rose Mary Wentling, University of Illinois

The Role of HRD in The Welfare Revolution: Fostering Intergenerational Transformational Learning
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Diversity Management in Nonprofit Women's Health Care Settings: A Qualitative Study of Race, Class, and Gender Influences

Camille A. Cordak
Emory University

This field study delineates how race, class, and gender influence organizational culture and delivery of care in four nonprofit organizations. Data are compared both within and across sites. Conclusions focus on definitions of cultural diversity, the occurrence of activities which support diversity, and how an organization's diversity philosophy impacts on service delivery.

American organizations need to become expert at managing a diverse work force if they are to compete and succeed in the 21st century. Research in U.S. companies has shown that the organizational experiences of out-group (e.g., women, minorities, handicapped) employees are less positive than they are for majority (Caucasian American male) employees (Cox, 1993). Performance barriers that are created by racial, cultural, and/or sexual differences hinder organizational effectiveness (Haro, 1993). In the absence of programs for valuing and managing diversity, performance and productivity can drop. Turnover and absenteeism are often higher among women and minority American males (Hymowitz, 1989).

The integration of diversity initiatives into health care facilities will require organizational culture change (OCC), the use of organization development (OD) processes and principles, and strategies common to sociotechnical systems (STS) design. Past experience shows that OD applications developed for business settings have not been directly transferable to health care (Nadler & Tichy, 1982; Tichy, 1985; Weisbord, 1976) and fine-tuning has been necessary to experience limited success in applying STS design in health care settings (Chisholm & Ziegenfuss, 1986; Pasmore, Petee, & Bastian, 1986). It is expected that the successful implementation of diversity initiatives in health care settings will also need to be tailored to fit medical cultures.

If diversity management models are to be developed to fit health care organizations, and OD and organizational culture change theories are to be helpful in promoting the management of a diverse work force in health care, much needs to be learned about how diversity is currently conceptualized and addressed in various health care settings.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of learning to manage a diverse work force is heightened by the pressures of competition generated by health care reform and policy reforms at the national level (Mielke, 1994). It is imperative to develop models and theories of diversity management that can be applied to health care; yet, there is a paucity of research on diversity initiatives in health care organizations.

Two commonly recognized areas of work force diversity are race and gender. This awareness stems logically from Affirmative Action (AA) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs (Geber, 1990; Schwartz, 1989; Thomas, 1991). Using Gilligan's (1982) work on moral development which questions the appropriateness of comparing men and women within the same cultural framework, Fine, Johnson, and Ryan (1990) studied how the "cultures" of race and gender (i.e., the life experiences one has based on differential treatment due to race and/or gender) help to shape how workers view organizations. The results of their study suggested a theoretical perspective in which race and gender are viewed as cultures. It provides a useful framework for understanding cultural diversity in the workplace.

Another factor that must be considered when addressing diversity management in health care settings is socioeconomic status (SES)/class. Some experts point out that SES/class may be

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a more important variable than race in determining levels of achievement and access to resources (Wilson, 1978). This study was limited to examining the diversity variables of race, gender, and class. Other diversity issues such as handicaps, religion, and sexual orientation are not addressed.

The literature indicates a lack of valuing diversity and managing diversity research in the field itself (Johnson, 1992), and specifically in the area of health care. Johnson (1992) underscores the need for research by asking,

> How are valuing and managing diversity defined by different organizations? [Research should be performed]... (1) to describe the current status of valuing and managing diversity in the workplace; (2) to identify common components of valuing and managing diversity programs and processes.... A descriptive research study would help to establish a baseline from which to proceed in these directions. (p. 12)

Purpose of the Study. This study explains and describes how race, gender, and class dynamics influence the organizational culture and delivery of care in nonprofit women's health care settings by examining four such organizations. Wilkins and Dyer, Jr. (1988) suggest ethnographic and historical methods to get a real understanding of an organization's culture. Marsick (1990) also points out the importance of,

> [examining] "HRD through a variety of lenses and in so doing gain insights that strict adherence to one paradigm does not allow ... a fact that suggests the need for studies that are exploratory and hypothesis building in nature" (pp. 11, 20).

Research Questions. The following questions guided this study of diversity:

1. How do people at different levels of these organizations perceive and define race, gender, and class issues?
2. What activities take place to support diversity with regard to race, gender, and class; and by what processes are diversity initiatives implemented?
3. What impact do managers and employees think their perceptions of race, gender, and class diversity have on staff relations and on the delivery of services?

Methods and Site and Sample Selection

A qualitative design was chosen for this research because qualitative methods are especially well suited to studies that delve into complexities and processes; that study areas for which relevant variables have yet to be identified; that seek to describe innovative systems; that study informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organizations; and that intend to examine *real*, as opposed to espoused, organizational goals (Marshall, 1985). The study of employees' perceptions of race, gender, and class, the impact those perceptions have on interpersonal relationships and service delivery, and the study of informal activities that support diversity management in nonprofit women's health care facilities, fit the criteria for a qualitative research approach (Wilson, 1977).

As in any research, the unit of analysis for this study was determined by the purpose. In this case the purpose was to understand the organizational dynamics surrounding race, gender, and class in women's health care organizations. The unit of analysis was the organization.

Site Selection. This research was site-specific, therefore, purposive sampling was used to select the sites. It is the understanding of the organizational relationship dynamics based on race, gender, and class, or the conceptual model, not the specific research findings, that is intended for application in similar settings. The findings are not intended for use in a generalized fashion. This makes the low external validity of findings that this sampling technique generates acceptable, and perhaps even desirable, since it produces findings with high internal validity (Bernard, 1988).

The four organizations for this field study were selected based on the following factors: type of health care provided, funding source; population density and geographic setting; endurance; and staff and client census composition. These factors provide insight into how funding and location influence diversity management and increase the chances that the phenomena and systems studied, as stated in the guiding questions, would be present (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989).

This study focused on nonprofit women's health care facilities. Therefore, sites that offered gynecological care, obstetrical care, or both were chosen. In terms of funding, nonprofit organizations fall into two broad categories--publicly funded and privately funded. In terms of population density and geographic location, the Office of Budget and Management criteria for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) and nonMSAs were used to define population density. Two study sites were chosen from each category. The geographic stipulation was that sites must be located in the southeast. The southeast was studied because of familiarity with the region, access to and relationships with women's health care organizations within the region, and a well documented history of publicly enacted racial tension in this region.

For the purposes of this study, endurance was defined as, in operation for 3 years or more. This time period was chosen because it is desirable to have an organization and staff with some experience in the women's health care field and experience with the patients served by their particular facility. It is also more likely that patterns of relating and processes for interaction have been established in an organization that is not new.

Staff and client-base composition criteria were used to ensure that both the staff and clients were racially diverse. Sites participating in this study had staffs with 10% or more and client-bases with 20% or more of their members coming from racial and ethnic groups other than Caucasian American. This ensured that people had the opportunity to work with and deliver services to people from backgrounds different from their own. In addition to the above criteria there was a good mix of the people, processes, programs, structures, and interactions typically found in a nonprofit women's health care facility (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The study sites fit the above criteria and represented the four possible combinations of the funding and location variables: urban or rural and privately or publicly funded.

Sample Selection. Since this was an exploratory study that dealt with organizations of disparate size, performing a preset number of random interviews at each site would not ensure the number or type of interviewees needed to obtain rich data. Purposive sampling is a strategy that increases the likelihood that the individuals chosen for interview will be "knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 395). Therefore, purposive sampling was chosen as the most effective way to ensure that at least one employee from each staff level or vocational group had input into the research process and that those informants chosen for interviewing were knowledgeable about the organization (Patton, 1990).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection techniques used in this field study were interviewing, participant observation, and artifact collection. Semistructured interviews were carried out with the director, manager, or other highly placed person at each site who functioned as the key informant (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). The personnel administrator at each site, supervisors, and members of each vocational segment were also interviewed. Each site employed fewer than 20 people, therefore, purposive sampling techniques were judiciously applied to ensure equal representation of supervisors, racial and ethnic groups, and vocational segments.

Semistructured interviews were chosen as the interview type for this study, because of the limits that time and distance put on the amount of time able to be spent on-site, the pace and type of work done in health care settings, and the importance of collecting comparable data in order to enhance the reliability of the within- and across-site analyses. All interviewees granted permission to use a tape recorder. Interviews were professionally transcribed, checked for accuracy and coded.

Participant observation was accomplished within the same on-site time period as the interviews. The staff were aware of being observed; the purpose of the research was explained as that of gathering research on cultural diversity in women's health clinics for a research study and for practical use in the field. Observations of various elements of service delivery, informal "lunchroom" gatherings, and staff interactions and social networks occurred. Field notes of observations, reactions, and assessments were kept in a log and on event analysis forms. Field

notes were written into a descriptive narrative at the end of each observation and transferred to an event analysis form which contained the site name, date, brief description of the event(s), and comments and questions regarding the main theme and impressions, explanations, and speculations.

Artifact collection was accomplished by obtaining and reviewing records and documents that related to cultural diversity at each site. Promotional brochures, pamphlets, policy statements, personnel policies, organizational charts, personal and organizational office decor, waiting room magazines, waiting room toys and videos, and other artifacts that provided evidence of the cultural awareness of the organization and the people who work there were examined and noted. After examination of these artifacts a narrative account, including the interpretation of their importance, was prepared. This information was recorded on an artifact inventory sheet which contained the name of the artifact, the agency name and person from whom it was acquired, the date of procurement, a brief description of the item, and comments.

Data Analysis. One can break down analysis into three main phases: continuous discovery of tentative themes, concepts, and minitheories; categorizing of data and data reduction which takes place during and after data collection; and assessing the trustworthiness of the data and drawing conclusions (Marshall, 1985; McMillan & Schumacher, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Initially, descriptive codes were used to identify "chunks" of data that dealt with the same phenomenon. As the need to differentiate within broad categories emerged, interpretive codes were utilized. Later in the analysis process explanatory codes were developed to indicate patterns and themes. A definition of codes was developed to aid in the consistent application of the coding scheme. The codes and their definitions were refined as the research progressed. After all data were gathered a revised code sheet and definitions were produced (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Since this was a multisite field study, the interviews from each site were entered into a computerized textual data base manager for coding and analysis. Batch codings files were constructed based on different characteristics to facilitate the analysis. Once given the particular characteristics and codes to be compared, the computer printed out a complete list of all the text dealing with a particular concept or question. These batches made it possible to compare specific codes within and across particular groups.

Across-site analysis was performed by first building batch coding files for each site. Then comparisons within-site and within-coding categories were generated and within- and across-category clusters were produced. The results of this process assisted in writing the descriptive narrative of findings (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The descriptive narratives are the theoretical interpretation of how race, gender, and class influence the organizational culture and are managed in women's nonprofit health care centers.

Within-site Analysis Site A. This women's health care facility is located in a major southeastern U. S. metropolitan area and is part of a county health department. It is one of five county satellite offices. Of these five satellite sites, this particular site employs and serves the most diverse population within the service area. This clinic employs 14 full-time people, of whom three are Hispanic American, three are Asian American, two are African American, and six are Caucasian American (two of these six also speak Spanish); two of the 14 are male.

Definition of Cultural Diversity and Important Issues. This staff's definition of cultural diversity (CD) centered on people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities working together. Various terms were used to describe differences, but not the term race. It seemed to be an organizational cultural norm to avoid using the term race, or at least not to focus on it. It is possible that this staff may have a better understanding of race since they serve so many groups of people from within the same race, (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodians, Filipinos, and Koreans are all Asian). They indicated that the most important issues that need to be addressed for CD to flourish are the acceptance of differences, understanding different communication patterns, and understanding and acceptance of the differences in culturally-based work ethics.

Formal and Informal Activities that Support Cultural Diversity. Formal activities are defined as activities that are organization-generated while informal activities are those that are staff-generated. Formal activities that had occurred within the previous year were the availability of a cultural diversity workshop, reports from staff who were able to attend the workshop to those who

were unable to attend, and the provision of a Spanish class. Informal activities that occurred were ethnic pot-luck lunches, group lunches at ethnic restaurants, discussion of culture and ethnicity around the lunchroom table, screening of Hispanic and Vietnamese MTV-type videos for the staff, exchange of help on language class homework, and some after-hours socializing.

Diversity-based Recommendations for Changes in Service Delivery. Staff believed that service delivery could be improved if all staff were bilingual to some extent, had a deeper understanding of the various cultures of the people thy serve, and like-speaking people were scheduled together. For example, schedule Spanish-speaking people in a block during the time when the most bilingual Spanish-speaking staff would a be available.

Within-site Analysis Site B. This privately funded facility, which is part of a national reproductive health services organization, is located in a metropolitan area of the southeastern United States and has five satellite locations in two states. This particular site employs 10 full-time staff including the organization's administrative personnel. Of the full-time employees six are African American and four are Caucasian American. None of the staff are bilingual. The Director and some of the part-time physicians are the only males employed at the site.

Definition of Cultural Diversity and Important Issues. This staff's definition of CD centered on people with differences, primarily race and gender, working together and the importance of all people being treated the same. They indicated that the most important issues that need to be addressed for CD to flourish are an organization must strive to have diversity before it can be managed, elimination of differential expectations of performance and competence based on racial biases and the need for African Americans to excel in order to succeed, and the need for people to stop criticizing cultural values different from their own.

Formal and Informal Activities that Support Cultural Diversity. Formal activities that support CD are the annual meeting that everyone is invited to attend and the organization's EEO/AA policies. Informal activities that support CD are office parties and lunches for holidays and birthdays, and "Secret Santas" at the Christmas season.

Diversity-based Recommendations for Changes in Service Delivery. Staff believed that service delivery could be improved by hiring some bilingual staff members and by arranging for access to translators. These were interesting recommendations considering that the greater majority of the staff and clients are Caucasian and African American and they reported serving only a small number of Spanish-speaking clients.

Within-site Analysis Site C. This facility, located in a rural southeastern area, is part of the state and county health departments and employs 23 people. Nine of the 13 women's health staff members are housed in the medical building at this satellite location, three are located at another satellite facility about 15 miles away, and one serves at both locations; all 13 staff are female. Six staff members are African American and seven are Caucasian American. Vocational categories were demarcated by race. All the support staff are African American. All but one of the nurses, two of whom are also clinic managers, are Caucasian American; one nurse is African American. The majority of clients are African American. The next largest group are Caucasian Americans, and occasionally an Hispanic migrant worker comes to the clinic for services.

Definition of Cultural Diversity and Important Issues. This staff's definition of CD centered on the mixture of cultures, classes, and races, especially races represented by the staff and clients of the facility. They indicated that the most important issues that need to be addressed for CD to flourish are that race discrimination and denial of the relevance of race must be eliminated, the need for people to be treated equally, the importance of accepting others' values, recruitment of more minority nurses, and open and direct communication.

Formal and Informal Activities that Support Cultural Diversity. Formal activities that had occurred within the previous year were cross-cultural workshops for nurses, meetings on how to attract diverse clients, and inservice training on civil rights. Informal activities that occurred were a Christmas party, birthday and good-by lunches, and open invitations to weddings and "drop-ins."

Diversity-based Impacts on Service Delivery. This site had no recommendations for improvements in service delivery due to the fact that they were focused on handling the negative impacts generated by cultural intolerance. These impacts included: the discontinuation of case

management for some patients, poor rapport, and "talking down" to patients, all due to race and class tension; delays in service provision due to interpersonal tensions among staff; and clients' biased expectations that medical and nursing staff will be Caucasian American.

Within-site Analysis Site D. This privately funded site is located in a rural area of the southeastern United States, is part of a national reproductive health services organization, and is composed of a main facility and a satellite located about 20 miles away. Even though some people from the main site were interviewed because they set policy for the satellite site and occasionally work there, the focus of the study was the rural satellite site because of the diversity it possesses. The majority of staff at the main site are Caucasian American. The staff at the satellite clinic are a mixture of Hispanic American, African American, and Caucasian American. The whole organization has 12 full-time employees and various other part-time employees. The entire staff is female and predominately Caucasian American; one receptionist and one clinic assistant are Hispanic American. The three people located at the satellite site are one Caucasian American who speaks Spanish, an Hispanic American, and an African American.

Most of the clients at the main site are Caucasian American and a few are Asian American. The clients at the satellite site are a mixture of mostly Hispanic Americans, and African Americans, Caucasian Americans, and Asian Americans, in descending order of prevalence.

Definition of Cultural Diversity and Important Issues. This staff's definition of CD centered on blending people from different cultures and races who have different traits and who are working together in order to get along well and the importance of the staff reflecting the diversity of the client base. They indicated that the most important issues that need to be addressed for CD to flourish are the need to engage in values clarification, work through one's own biases, and address resistance to diversity; build sensitivity to class-based issues; effective communication; and learn about the effects that culture has on the perceptions of health and illness.

Formal and Informal Activities that Support Cultural Diversity. Formal activities that had occurred within the previous year were training on how to effectively work together, the Christmas party, and participation in the community's Black Awareness Day. Informal activities that occurred during the same time period were group activities at various staff members' homes, birthday parties and lunches, and sharing one's own cultural experiences.

Diversity-based Recommendations for Changes in Service Delivery. Staff believed that service delivery could be improved by having educational pamphlets in more languages, securing access to translators fluent in less common dialects, relocating to a "safer" part of town, and developing and incorporating a program about differences into the organization's operational plan.

Across-site Analysis. The four sites varied in their definitions of cultural diversity, activities that support cultural diversity, impact of diversity perceptions on coworker and patient relationships, and impact on or recommendations for changes in service delivery. Therefore, the goal of the across-site analysis was to determine the common themes across all sites that relate to diversity management and describe any differences in those themes based on employment position or class and race. The three common themes that emerged are based on verbatim answers to interview questions asked of each respondent and are confirmed by policies and field observations.

The three common themes that emerged from the data were: (a) potential promotion and demotion have virtually no effect on opinions about cultural diversity issues, (b) management and employee perceptions of organizational tolerance of bigoted behavior are similar, and (c) managers and employees conceptualize their roles and responsibilities in advancing workplace cultural diversity differently.

Conclusions

The results of this study support three major conclusions. People's definitions of cultural diversity focus on race and ethnicity. When all the other issues are stripped away race and ethnicity are at the heart of most people's diversity concerns. Some respondents acknowledged class as a diversity issue, but it was often the case that class was used in place of or in conjunction with race and

ethnicity. A few people talked about religion, educational level, and politics as diversity issues, but none was more salient than race and ethnicity.

The occurrence of formal and informal activities which support diversity do not equate with a diversity program or necessarily indicate a healthy and productive diversity environment. All sites engaged in formal and informal activities which supported diversity. Yet, according to Bowens, Merenivitch, Johnson, James, and McFadden-Bryant's (1993) model of the four evolutionary phases of development of a multicultural organization, none of these four sites were at the nurturing or visionary stages. Most were teetering between defensive apathy and denial and offensive activism.

An organization's unspoken cultural diversity philosophy, in the form of each individual's own perceptions, will impact on service delivery. This was evident in all sites and it was powerfully articulated in Site C. Even though the respondents could not or would not link what impact their perceptions had on delivery of services, behaviors that negatively influence service delivery were apparent (see Site C, *Diversity-based Impacts on Service Delivery*).

Contributions to the Field of HRD and Beyond

This study contributes to the field of human resource development (HRD) by expanding research knowledge about OD and culture change research in nonprofit women's health care settings. By discovering more about health care subcultures and how they deal with race and class the application of OD and culture change theories to the health care field can be improved. Knowledge from this study can also be incorporated into training and development theory and practice regarding valuing and managing cultural diversity .

Other benefits of this study are the hypothesis-generating questions and issues it raises. If replicated in other areas of the country, would the definition of cultural diversity focus strongly on race? It was noted that the introduction of a third racial or ethnic group reduced the tension between Caucasian and African Americans. Is this a common occurrence in the southeast and does the introduction of a third racial/ethnic group reduce Black-White tensions in other areas of the country? Study participants defined cultural diversity. How would they describe a successful diversity program? In these study sites gender was determined to be a nonissue since so few males were employed. Is this generally true in organizations where one gender predominates or is race always the preeminent concern when examined along with gender, even in work settings with a greater number of male and female employees working together?

By gaining a deeper understanding of how race and class influence health care service delivery, this study also has the potential to improve service delivery and health outcomes for patients who utilize these health care services. Of the approximately 3,600 U.S. women's health care centers, 71 percent are small- to moderately-sized reproductive health facilities (Landmark Study, 1995). The nations' women are largely in the hands of such centers and their well-being is surely influenced by how they are treated. It is imperative for these organizations to reduce or eliminate any mistreatment of patients which may be due to diversity issues, regardless of whether the mistreatment stems from differences in race, class, gender, culture, religion, sexual preference, or any other "cultural" variance.

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An Analysis of Diversity Training Provided by Business and Industry

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The purpose of this research study was to select a number of major employing companies with exemplary diversity training programs and diverse workforces and to identify strategies, policies and practices that create work environments that are conducive to the development, retention and promotion of diverse groups in the workforce. This research study has helped to facilitate the implementation of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act by identifying criteria that will help to assure that the environments at work-based learning sites will be conducive to the needs of a diverse student population.

The demographic composition of our society and the workforce has changed considerably and is expected to continue undergoing dramatic changes in the near future (Bolick & Nestleroth, 1988; Johnston & Packer, 1987). According to Loden and Rosener (1991), the demographic change will be away from the European-American male and more towards an increased diverse and segmented population. This population will include women and men of all races, ethnic backgrounds, ages, and lifestyles. It will include people of diverse sexual/affectional orientations, religious beliefs, and different physical abilities, who will need to work together effectively.

Others also agree that modern society is undergoing a historic transition from a predominately white society rooted in Western culture to a global society composed of diverse racial and ethnic minorities (Fernandez, 1993; O'Hare, 1993; Triandis, Kurowski, & Gelfand, 1992). According to the US. Bureau of the Census (1994) projections, by the 21st century today's racial and ethnic minorities who now comprise about twenty-five percent of the U.S. population will comprise nearly one-half of all Americans. In the next century, African Americans, Asians, and Latinos will out number Whites in the U.S.

In addition, the rapid growth in the number of minorities has been marked by an increasing diversity in terms of language differences, cultural beliefs, and other practices within these population groups as new immigrant groups from the 1980s (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodians, Dominicans, Nicaraguans) have joined earlier immigrant groups of Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Chinese Americans, and Japanese. Also, by 2010, Hispanics are expected to supplant African Americans as the nation's largest minority group (O'Hare, 1993).

The significant increase in minority populations also affects market place demands. According to the Population Reference Bureau, African Americans, Asians, and Latinos currently make up about 21 percent of the U.S. consumer base and they are expected to reach 25 percent by the year 2000. In 1990, minority populations spent about $424 billion and they are expected to reach $650 billion by the year 2000 (O'Hare, 1993). To market products and serve a variety of diverse customers effectively, organizations will have to employ a diverse workforce (Jackson, 1991).

Increasingly, workplaces will face the same issues and problems that public schools have been facing with regard to understanding and utilizing the full range of human potential within this very diverse population. People from many diverse groups will be working together to keep business running competitively (Burack & Mathys, 1987; Goldstein, 1991; Griggs, 1995; Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991; Loden & Rosener, 1991; Thomas, 1991). According to Triandis and Bhawuk (1994) only companies that have cultures which support diversity will be able to retain the best talent necessary to remain competitive.

Surveys of business leaders indicate that interest in managing diversity is widespread (Jackson & Associates, 1992). For example, in one study of 645 firms, 74 percent of the

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respondents were concerned about increased diversity, and of these about one-third felt that diversity affected their corporate strategy. When the company executives were asked why they were so concerned about managing diversity, they mentioned the following two primary reasons: (1) perception that supervisors did not know how to motivate their diverse work groups, and (2) uncertainty about how to handle the challenge of communicating with employees whose cultural backgrounds result in differing assumptions, values, and sometimes language skills (Towers Perrin & Hudson Institute, 1990). Some companies have connected higher turnover rates for women and minorities to a work environment that does not support diversity (Cox & Blake, 1991; Kilborn, 1990). Consequently, the lack of support for diversity has incurred excessive recruiting and training costs (Caudron, 1990; Schmidt, 1988).

Even though individuals who are different from White males now constitute the great majority of the our society, and the American workforce, they continue to be perceived as being outside the cultural norm in many organizations. This has resulted in limited career opportunities and low expectations for most diverse populations (Dunnette & Motowidlo, 1982; Loden & Rosener, 1991). In the past, for many reasons women and non-European Americans have not been as successful by any measures in the world-of-work as European American males. We are at a critical point in history where two forces are in a position to reverse this situation: the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and diversity training.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act provides states with federal assistance to develop and implement a statewide school-to work transition system to assist new entrants to the labor force. An important component of this legislation is the creation of partnerships between education and employers. The legislation seeks to include employers as full partners in providing students with high-quality, work-based learning through job training or work experiences. One of the major goals for this system is to assist all students in the successful transition from school into meaningful, high quality employment.

There are numerous ways in which different individuals have defined diversity. Definitions of the term range from narrow to very broad. Narrow definitions tend to reflect Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law and define diversity in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, age, national origin, religion and disability (Wheeler, 1994). Broad definitions may also include sexual orientation, values, personality characteristics, education, language, physical appearance, martial status, life-style, beliefs, and background characteristics such as geographic origin, tenure with the organization, and economic status (Carr, 1993; Caudron, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Triandis, 1994). This research study has focused on diversity in the broadest sense, which includes all the different characteristics that make one individual different from another. The major purpose for defining diversity so broadly is that it is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone as part of the diversity that should be valued. This broad definition is the basis on which this research study was focused, in order to respond to the question of how business and industry train employees to accommodate workforce diversity.

Purpose and Scope of Study

This research project was designed to study a selected number of major employing companies with exemplary diversity training programs and diverse workforces to identify strategies, policies and practices that create work environments that are conducive to the development, retention, and promotion of a diverse workforce, including youths in school-to-work programs.

The term diversity has many meanings in contemporary society. In this project it was used to refer to the increasingly heterogeneous qualities of the emerging workforce in the United States. The ethnic, race, culture and gender composition of school age youth is considerably more diverse than that of the contemporary workforce, and this has considerable implications for the implementation of the work-based learning component of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. The Illinois Department of Employment predicts that by the year 2000, 90 percent of all new hires in the State of Illinois will be women and minorities.

An increasing number of youth in the 16 to 24 years old group will be entering the job market by the end of the 1990s. These youth are likely to be more ethnically diverse than the workers in today's workforce (Finney, 1989; Johnston & Packer, 1987; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1994). African-Americans' and Hispanics' birth rate is four times and seven times that of White Americans respectively. Therefore, as a proportion of the youth population, African-Americans will increase from 13.7 in 1980 to 18.5 by the year 2000. Hispanics are expected to constitute 12 to 15 percent of all youth by the year 2000. This increase in their numbers will require business organizations to hire more from the African -American and Hispanic populations (Triandis & Bhawuk, 1994). "The great challenge facing the nation is to prepare a changing population of young people to do new kinds of work. Failure imperils economic health, social progress, and democracy itself" (Hamilton, 1990, p. 1). As our nation's economic conditions get better, the demands for workers will increase and employers will also have to turn increasingly to young people otherwise suffer from a serious labor shortage. These and other statistics indicate that in the future, minority growth will exceed non-minority growth in the work place, thereby promoting the need to understand the implications of workforce diversity.

As business, industry and schools struggle to come to terms with "diversity", the question of how to accommodate workforce diversity has become a primary focus and a major challenge. The question of how to work with employers to implement the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and accommodate the work-based learning needs of a diverse group of students will also become a major challenge.

Many of the nation's major employing companies (many of them multinational corporations) have initiated training for new and continuing employees to try to achieve a wide array of diversity goals in their high performance workplaces. According to Rossett and Bickham (1994) there are a variety of reasons organizations get involved diversity programs. Some of these reasons are: Compliance (they want to do what is expected of them by taxpayers, shareholders, and society); harmony (they want all employees to understand and appreciate each other); inclusion (they want underrepresented employees to succeed); justice (they want to correct past wrongs); and transformation (they want to change the way the organization does business in order to take into account diverse employees, customers, and markets). Diversity training should enable these companies to be better prepared to accommodate the needs to the students placed in their charge for work-based learning. However, such companies are not likely to be geographically accessible to the large number of students in urban and rural settings who will participate in school-to-work programs. These students will more likely be placed in small firms where diversity training is limited if provided at all.

Business and educational organizations that learn to use diversity as an asset will stride ahead of those that don't. The payoff will be increased productivity, higher quality, more adaptable to change, more innovation, improved work relationships among employees, more effective work teams, increased customer satisfaction, and increased job tenure (Carnevale & Stone, 1995; Catalyst, 1993; Cox, 1993; Fernandez, 1991; Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991; Mobley & Payne, 1992; Morrison, 1992; Thomas, 1990; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1994).

Research Questions

This study addressed the following major research questions:

1. What are the barriers that have inhibited the employment, development, retention and promotion of diverse groups in the workforce, and are likely to effect the successful implementation of school-to-work programs?
2. What effective strategies are being used to remove these barriers and what are the implications for training?
3. What are the components of an effective diversity training programs?
4. What goals should be advocated for all students in work-based learning programs?

5. What are the most appropriate ways for school personnel to assist students in work-based learning programs?
6. What are the criteria for determining diversity sensitive work-based learning sites.

Data Collection Methods

This project utilized the following methods and sources for collecting data: In-depth literature review; interviews with diversity experts; on-site case studies of selected diversity training programs; and focus groups with school-to-work directors.

Literature Review An extensive literature review was conducted of periodicals (e.g. business, education, academic, trade, research), master theses, doctoral dissertations, research reports, monographs, books, and other documents, in order to address the major research questions of the study. The literature review was written in a report that described in detail the literature on diversity in the workforce in order to bring about an understanding of the complexity and breadth of workplace diversity issues, and provide information that could be used by educators, as well as people from business and industry. The literature review report included the following sections: The changing society and workforce; reasons organizations are managing and valuing diversity; barriers to managing diversity; strategies for managing diversity; diversity training; benefits of diversity training; types of diversity training; conducting a needs assessment; content of training; selecting a trainer; training methods and techniques; challenges and obstacles of diversity training; characteristics of an effective diversity training program; evaluation of diversity training; and future trends related to diversity.

Interviews Telephone interviews were conducted with twelve diversity experts located throughout the United States (west coast, midwest, and east coast) in order to obtain a stronger knowledge base about diversity in the workplace. Through the extensive in-depth literature review mention above, a list of twenty diversity experts was developed. Then twelve diversity experts from the list were selected based on the following criteria: (a) had experience on working with diversity programs in both public and private sectors; (b) published articles and/or books in the field of diversity; (c) had conducted research on diversity aimed at "real work" applications; (d) served as active diversity consultant with corporate and public-sector clients; and (e) had been involved in diversity work closely related to the topic of this study. An interview guide was also developed to assist in collecting data from the interviews.

Case Studies Case studies (on-site visitations) of eight selected companies with diversity training programs were conducted, in order to have the opportunity to observe and document exemplary diversity training programs and to build on to the knowledge base obtained from the literature review and the interviews with diversity experts. The population for the case studies (on-site visitations) was composed of the 33 multinational corporations in the State of Illinois listed in the book entitled, *Directory of Diversity in Corporate America* (1994). From those 33 corporations, a sample of eight was randomly selected to participate in the study. The companies for the case studies (on-site visitations) were also selected based on the following criteria: (a) Have extensive experience with workforce diversity, (b) are multinational corporations, (c) are allocating resources to diversity initiatives, and (d) have launched successful corporate diversity initiatives.

Focus Groups Focus groups with eight school-to-work directors were conducted to obtain feedback and direction on establishing criteria for determining diversity sensitive work-based learning sites and/or companies that assist in the successful transition of youth into the workplace. After reviewing the total number of school-to-work directors (14) in the midwest a sample of eight school-to-work directors were randomly selected to participate in the focus groups. The type of information that was obtained from the focus groups included the following: The characteristics of the students involved in the school-to-work programs (e.g., gender, age, experiences, disabilities, socio-economic background, educational level, special needs); barriers encountered by students in making the transition from school-to-work; type of assistance that companies can provide to

students to help make the transition from school-to-work more successful; and the different variables that make these students diverse and different.

Findings

The following are some major findings based upon the results of the study.

1. The major barriers that have inhibited the employment, development, retention, and promotion of diverse groups in the workplace can be categorized into two types. The first type of barrier is external in nature and comes from the environment. The second type of barrier is internal and comes from the individuals themselves.
2. The six external barriers which are most likely to inhibit the advancement of diverse groups in the workplace include: Negative attitudes and discomfort towards people who are different, discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping, racism, and bias.
3. The six internal barriers which are most likely to inhibit the advancement of diverse groups in the workplace include: Poor career planning, inadequate skill perpetration, lack of organizational political savvy, lack of proper education, low self-esteem, and poor self-image.
4. The six factors most likely to influence diversity in the workplace include demographic changes, global marketplace, economics, people today are more comfortable being different, a diverse customer base, and Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action programs.
5. The four major reasons that organizations manage diversity include: To improve productivity and remain competitive; to form better work relationships among employees; to enhance social responsibility, and to address legal concerns.
6. The six best strategies for managing diversity include: Training and education programs, organizational policies that mandate fairness and equity for all employees, mentoring programs, performance appraisal systems that are non-discriminatory, outreach programs, and career development programs.
7. Other important recommendations for managing diversity include: Obtain top management support, integrate diversity into all company functions, use a combination of strategies, and create a corporate culture that supports diversity.
8. Diversity training needs to began with increasing awareness of what the concept of diversity is and why it is important. The skill training then should provide the specific information needed to create behavior changes that are required to effectively manage and work within a diverse workforce. Then application strategies and support needs to be provided so that diversity awareness and skills can be applied to improve work performance.
9. The major goals of diversity training are to increase personal effectiveness and organizational effectiveness.
10. The ten components of an effective diversity training program include: Get commitment and support from top management, include as part of the organizational strategic plan, develop programs that meet the specific needs of the organization, create inclusive programs, combined with other diversity initiatives, make attendance mandatory, utilize qualified trainers, provide trust and confidentiality, require accountability, and conduct evaluation.
11. The major goals that should be advocated for all students in work-based learning programs include: Obtain a good education, become knowledgeable about diversity issues, develop a career plan, take responsibility for your success, and learn to be an effective team member.
12. The most appropriate ways for school personnel to assist students in work-based learning programs are by providing student with the following: career guidance; work teams/groups activities; mentoring; role models; diversity awareness and skills; and activities to raise educational and performance expectations.
13. The criteria for determining diversity sensitive work-based learning sites include: Successful in recruiting, hiring and retaining minority employees. minority employees are represented at all levels of the company, absence of discrimination lawsuits, use a combination of initiatives to address diversity, and has a corporate culture that respects and values differences.

14. The future trends related to diversity include: Society will become more diverse and therefore, the workforce and the marketplace with become more diverse; there will be more globalization of corporations, which will lead to a more global workforce, marketplace, and economy; diverse work teams will be a reality in organizations; diversity will become more of a business concern than a social concern, and be more closely linked to competitive strategies; diverse populations will make more money and spend more money and this increase wealth will empower diversity; senior managers will become more involved in diversity issues because they will realize that the diverse workforce needs to be better utilized in order to remain competitive; more training professionals will face the challenge of dealing with backlash; and diversity training will be integrated more with other types of training.

Educational Importance of the Study

The changing work force is one of the most extraordinary and significant challenges facing United States organizations today. Our society is changing quickly and the demographic changes within the American workplace have the potential to affect many aspects of organizational management. It is expected that the extent to which these changes are efficiently and effectively managed will have important impact on the competitive and economic outcome for organizations. Organizations that recognize that they need to fully utilize all members of their work force in order to remain competitive are responding by utilizing a variety of different approaches to manage diversity.

The information from this study can be used in a variety of ways. First, the study helped to provide an interpretation of the diversity process within corporations, which can assist educators in understanding the status of the process within these organizations. From this study, educators can learn about differences in organizational responses to diversity. They can understand the varying levels of diversity concerns within corporations and the different strategies that are implemented to address diversity in the workplace. The information on workforce diversity from this study will enable educators to: (a) revise their curricula appropriately to reflect changes in the workplace; (b) identify workable strategies for accommodating and managing differences in the workforce; and (c) illustrate for their students the continuing impact of diversity on the organizational culture and climate of these corporations.

Second, this study provided information on the status of the diversity process in several organizational sites which, can be useful to decision-makers, such as human resource managers, training and development specialists, and line managers. The information on workforce diversity from this study can be used for benchmarking within their organizations. In addition, this study may aid in the self-reflective process organizations use to assess their current status and assist them in developing strategic plans that address diversity within their organizations. The information from the study may influence the development of a deeper understanding of diversity processes within organizations. This understanding, in turn, may provide insight and direction for improving practice not only in the field of human resource development, but also in other areas of management. The information may encourage or persuade human resource development practitioners or any person in charge of programs dealing with diversity in organizations to: (a) better assess the needs of the employees, (b) improve the design, implementation, and evaluation of diversity efforts, and (c) identify initiatives to improve the management of a diverse workforce.

Third, the information obtained from this study can be used to help facilitate the implementation of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and help to assure that the environments at work-based learning sites will be conducive to the needs of a diverse student population. The results of the study can also be used to help school-to-work program coordinators select sites for work-based learning, and can be used to prepare work-site supervisors to work with students who are ethnically, culturally and in other ways different from their current workers. In addition, the information from the study can provide educators, as well as, human resource professionals with guidelines to follow when selecting or assessing workplace environments that are conducive to maximizing the contributions of all workers.

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The Role of Hrd in The Welfare Revolution: Fostering Intergenerational Transformational Learning

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Many proposals have been made to get women off welfare and into the workplace. Despite government initiatives, failure may be inevitable. This article reports on the transformative learning processes of eight African American women who transcended the negative social and economic forces inherent in their backgrounds, revealing factors relevant to their workplace success, and the obstacles that slowed their progression. The potential role of HRD interventions to maximize their success in the workplace is discussed.

A new welfare law, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, went into effect October 1996. Because of this new law, many habitually unemployed will be in the labor market five years from now (Vobejda and Havemann, 1996). The children of these people will be in the labor market early in the next century. The application of these new welfare reform policies should have dramatic effects on the HRD imperatives of organizations in the next decade because increasing the capabilities of the population will likely become the responsibility of their employers.

Welfare reform in the 1990s has implications beyond reducing the federal budget and deficit. The *misery* index of inflation and unemployment in the United States is at an all time low. A major cost is incurred by organizations engaged in the process of hiring employees and high turnover rates create an incredible waste of resources that compound this cost. An additional cost in today's workplace is the situation in which an organization is unable to function at full capacity because it is unable to secure sufficient quantity and quality of employees. If this trend continues into the next century, organizations may find an advantage in developing policies that foster improvement in the quality and quantity of the pool of available employees.

Previous studies look at the current life of welfare and poverty-stricken women and the impact that the current welfare reform initiatives will have on their lives. Many researchers suggest that the current welfare proposals are not the wherewithal that will break the poverty cycle of women. Instead, there is agreement among researchers that the creation of a class of women below their existing poverty line, if the current policy is enforced, will be the inevitable outcome (Aaronson, S., & Hartmann, H., 1996; Bassuk, E., 1996; Kates, E., 1996; Piotrkowski, C., & Kessler-Sklar 1996; Schnitzer, P., 1996).

According to the literature, the current welfare laws did not take into consideration the reality of women who live in poverty. For example, Bassuk (1996) reported that the new laws were primarily enacted out of mythical assumptions about women on welfare and are not applicable to the real context in which they live. The demonization of the poor as suggested by Sidel (1996) in review of the welfare to work laws are said to be simplistic and inadequate solutions to end welfare and break the poverty cycle. Debunking the dependency myths and stereotypes of women on welfare who work for short periods or are continuous users of the welfare system, Salomon, Bussak, & Brooks' (1996) findings show that they are not abusers but are managing based on their complex experiences.

Other studies have concluded that the limitations of the new law do not take into consideration the needs of the diverse subgroups (Brooks & Buckner, 1996; Piotrkowski & Kessler-Sklar, 1996; Kates, 1996; Aaronson & Hartmann, 1996). The new welfare to work policy does not address the barriers to self-sufficiency. These studies provide directions for program initiatives and policy that are more reflective of the reality of welfare recipients who survive in a class of poverty. For instance, new initiatives should take into consideration job maintenance, the issues of violence and abuse, barriers to employment, and education. Other benefits at work such as family access to medical coverage, paid family leave, and quality child care were also identified as important to this transition from welfare to

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work. Looking at deficits in women can and has derailed the poor from making great strides in their socioeconomic advancement. More employer-assisted effort should be given toward guiding the poor into an economic self-sufficient lifestyle (Piotrkowski & Kessler-Sklar, 1996).

This multiple case study research examined the life experiences of eight African American women who grew up in an impoverished environment and became successful in achieving upward mobility. The lives of these eight women, who were in highly responsible positions in the government, private industry, and self-ownership were examined to ascertain the learning processes at work that enabled them to achieve their socioeconomic advancement.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study was Mezirow's (1991) perspective transformation learning theory that involves an individual's awareness of her conditions and the reasons why of experience. The individual begins to reflect on the basic assumptions of her earlier years that could lead to a transformation of perspectives and the learners move away from their uncritical nonreflective view of the world toward one with more meaning (Mezirow, 1991). As a guide during the interview process, the model was useful in identifying the experiences and influences in the lives of the participants, exposing the idea of an intergenerational transformational learning process which connected to the notion of how these African American women learned and realized their potential.

Literature relating to social mobility discusses a variety of factors or attributes that African American women employ to overcome adversity. Studies addressing the transformative learning of African American women who overcame the poverty cycle and achieved upward mobility are not complete in the assessment of the process through which an individual changes her perspective (Boyd, 1993; McAdoo, 1988; Peterson, 1992; Scott, K., 1991; Scott, P., 1982). Thus, further research was warranted to examine the transformative learning constructs or pivotal influences that motivated them from the perspective of race, gender, domination, and subordination to illustrate and understand the process of moving beyond barriers of welfare and poverty.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this study was to look at the early life experiences considered as pivotal influences in motivating African American women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds to achieve higher degrees of upward mobility. As a subset of a larger population of interest (people who grew up in impoverished conditions), being socialized or trapped in the welfare system and other conditions of poverty is more salient with African American women because of additional barriers that have made it difficult for some to do otherwise. There was not an assumption that the participants had faced a transformational learning experience, but the study was designed to uncover a process if it did, in fact, occur.

Research Questions

Two primary research questions were formulated to guide the data collection in this study.

1. How has a small selected group of African American women from lower socioeconomic class backgrounds been able to break their particular poverty cycle to become upwardly mobile achievers with respect to the following elements:
   (a) learning to see other potential life paths;
   (b) gaining the capabilities to pursue higher economic rewards; and
   (c) learning to function in different environments that require new social interactions?
2. What is the role of work related experiences in fostering the transition from dependent poverty-based existence to some higher level of functioning?

Method

A multiple-case study design was selected to accomplish the objective of this research. Participants were recruited through informal requests and referrals. Eight women were recruited from an initial pool of twelve potential participants in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Qualifying criteria limited selection to African American women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who had parents with limited or no education above high school who worked in menial jobs such as domestic labor and low status service oriented positions. Each participant completed a demographic questionnaire that solicited information about their childhood family background, and parent's educational level of achievement and career patterns. Parents had limited education ranging from none to high school, and some women had their family income supplemented by government assistance when in and out of work.

Description of Study Participants The women interviewed were the first of their siblings (number ranged from none to 20 siblings) to achieve significant mobility. The participants were in the age range of 40 to 57. All had earned degrees above the bachelor level. Their professional attainment ranged from government leadership positions, to private industry, to entrepreneurship. Income ranged from $49,000 to $100,000. However, at the time of the interview, none of the participants felt they had reached their maximum level of mobility and were optimistic about their futures.

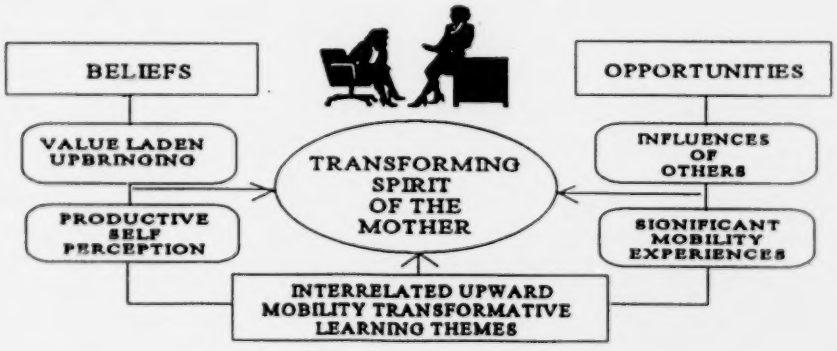
Data Collection The data were gathered through multiple, in-depth individual interviews with participants. Tape recordings of interviews were transcribed and coded using Ethnograph software. These informal interviews were the primary source of data and were presented in descriptive narrative case study profiles. Categories and themes that emerged from the data were extracted from each case in a cross case analysis. Major thematic connections within each of their stories were extrapolated for analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis A grounded theory approach was used to examine the early life experiences of these women, tracing their journey from impoverished backgrounds to increasingly successful upward mobility. This examination included three aspects of their lives: (a) a childhood upbringing, (b) education, and (c) early work experiences. These were posed as significant periods for the participants to reflect upon, up to the point when they perceived that socioeconomic mobility would no longer be a problem.

Results

Two core themes were identified that encompassed four major common themes facilitating a transformation process that led to upward mobility as depicted in Figure 1. Two of the four themes were related to fundamental *beliefs* instilled at an early age: a value-laden upbringing and productive self-perception. The remaining two themes related to specific *opportunities* that affected their lives in meaningful ways: influences from others and significant experiences crucial to mobility. The message of beliefs and opportunities embraced by the women in this study piloted them to a more productive and upwardly mobile future. Results are summarized under the discussion questions.

Figure 1. Intergenerational Transformational Interrelated Upward Mobility Themes



Research Question One How has a small selected group of African American women from lower socioeconomic class backgrounds been able to break their particular poverty cycle to become upwardly mobile achievers with respect to the following elements: learning to see other potential life paths; gaining the capabilities to pursue higher economic rewards; and learning to function in different environments that require new social interactions? A combination of interdependent factors (life long values, self-perception, influences, and experiences) influenced these African American women to move beyond the barriers of their youth and achieve mobility.

Other Life Paths. Two key factors under the belief concept were a ***value laden upbringing*** and a ***productive self-perception.*** Whether given by their mother, grandmother, or surrogate mother, it was their early childhood value-laden foundation that brought comfort and resolution in their lives, during periods of adversity. As one participant stated, "It takes a whole village to raise a child and that is how I grew up." Value laden upbringing focused on basic lifelong values, spirituality, morals, work ethics, and educational achievements. This would allow them to maintain their goal-driven purpose.

The development of an individual's self-perception begins to form in their early life experiences, risks, and responsibilities. For the participants in this study, becoming responsible early in their life and encountering different experiences and meeting different people has a positive impact on their self-perception. As a participant was told by her mother, " . . . as long as you had some sense of direction, you will keep yourself on track." Another participant stated that "I never felt the external environment would control what I was able to do with my life." The focus was on developing a positive self esteem, an internal locus of control, a sense of purpose, and goal driven behaviors. As one participant surmised, "We knew certain goals were aspired to us, the value of education, family, manners, and honesty." This message of beliefs embraced by the African American women in this study piloted them to a more productive and upwardly mobile future.

Pursuing Higher Economic Rewards. Another theme that emerged was *opportunities*, and like *beliefs*, it represents the pivotal influences and enlightening experiences which were critical links in the lives of these upwardly mobile African American women. The diversity of social mobility experiences was focused on the ***influences of others*** and ***significant mobility experiences*** which shaped the lives of the women in this study.

Family members, friends, teachers, and others of influence may prompt an individual as they shape how that individual will think of herself and her life chances (Chafe, 1977; Boyd, 1993). All of the participants discussed how the influence of others was a motivating factor in their lives. "People who made changes or made me want to change were teachers, neighbors with their encouraging words," stated one participant. Another said, "The more encouragement I received . . . the more successful I wanted to become." Positive role models, support networks, early influences, negative role models, and maternal influences were significant factors that led to upward socioeconomic mobility for this select group of women. The message they conveyed was that of being responsible for your life and the choices you make.

Significant mobility experiences were identified as adverse self-inflicted, adverse non self-inflicted, positive fortuitous, positively intentionally designed, and coping. As the data revealed, whether the experience directly involved the study participants or took place in another contexts, the outcome of such an event was causal to their decision to take action that was conducive to positive gains. For example, one participant was the 21st born of 21 children and she described her siblings negative experiences in life as reinforcing in the direction her life took. She spoke of the consequence of the limitations that most of her siblings experienced. She said,

> Some of them didn't have good lives . . . there was spousal abuse . . . and as a result of this, I made up in my mind, and I am certain that it was from the first grade forward, that because my mother had told me that education was the way to have a better life . . . that my life would be different.

The experiences of these women were unique to them. However, the outcome was the same. They had the beliefs and the opportunities to move beyond their poverty existence. As one participant was told, "You have a mind of your own, use it." Participants experienced both setbacks and advances. It was this diversity of experience that they considered significant in their desire to achieve. The adversity themes reveal that, despite their present condition, situation, or experience, it did not deter the study participants

from reevaluating their priorities and staying focused on their goals. Often these experiences were the turning point in the participant's lives and reinforced their beliefs, and their drive to achieve a better life. Gaining the capabilities to pursue higher economic areas and learning to function in new environments that required new social interaction was conveyed. They reflected the learning that transformed their lives in their self-told stories--stories that painted a picture of the influential guidance and leadership of mothers, grandmothers; siblings; surrogates; role models; and others in the schools; churches; communities; work; and the opportunities that resulted because of the interpersonal and interdependent connections. Their mothers encouraged the participant's to excel and this continued with teachers and other role models.

New Social Interactions. These participants were motivated by exposure to different environments. Through exposure to economically and culturally diverse environments, they were motivated to do better with their lives. Early exposure gained by being in contact with people in higher socioeconomic levels or by moving to a diverse area helped them cope and compete for better opportunities. One woman said that, "A lot of the things I could attain as an African American woman depended on me." Another believed " . . . that exposure made[her] realize that there was so much more in life and if prepared opportunities would increase. . ." Both negative and positive experiences helped rather than hinder these participants' abilities to move beyond their existing barriers.

Research Question Two What is the role of work related experiences in fostering the transition from dependent poverty-based existence to some higher level of functioning? The most common actions that the women took that helped them in their transition were learning coping behaviors, being persistent, and accepting support. To persevere challenges or discriminatory behaviors in the workplace, participants learned coping skills. One participant explained that she takes the focus off herself and gives her service to others. She said:

> What I did to offset that, I just reached out to the people that were around me and motivated people. I began to motivate others, and I began to give of myself separate and apart from what they were giving me. It's a strange paradox about some of us that when we are most suppressed and most kept back, we begin to give. We begin to give of ourselves.

Moving from a menial job to a more meaningful one was not an easy task. However, persistence paid off for the women in pursuit of more meaningful and financially rewarding work. Several participants received the support of their co-workers and supervisors, particularly from African American females. Several women seized opportunities to work outside their clerical responsibilities, creating opportunities to move into professional management level positions. One participant said that her efforts forged a better future for her, particularly since she was without a degree in her early career. Besides her ability to influence others, she gave credit to her superiors in the work environment who helped her persevere through the multitudes of obstacles (e.g., racial discrimination, railroaded to service oriented positions, low wages) she faced. Taking advantage of educational opportunities while working helped most of the participants' transition from a life of dependency. This also exposed them to other successful African American women and role models. A participant describes her experience in the following way:

> That's when I really found out about being an African American woman. What is the world like for you? What are the challenges out there? That really instilled in me that our strengths and all the things African American women have done, can do. It really helped me for coming out to the work environment.

Additionally, moving beyond barriers such as age, communication, and overt racism made them stronger and more determined to fulfill their goals and for one woman, " . . . become my own boss. . . ." The obstacles that these women faced were consistent with previous research (Boyd, 1993; Chafe, 1997; Chellis, 1992, Crawford, 1992; McAdoo, 1988, Nobles, 1988; Peterson, 1992; Scott, 1982; Thompson, 1986; Wider Opportunities for Women, 1990). Despite the types of workplace experiences, when the women faced challenges outside their control they never failed to remain focused on their purpose and that was to move out of a life of poverty that others thought was the fate of all who are born into that class (Thompson, 1986). To advance both professionally and academically, these women learned that they had

to create and seize opportunities, and use their coping skills to manage barriers that slowed their progression. An additional finding is summarized below.

Breaking The Poverty Cycle A significant finding of the study is an intergenerational transformational learning process that began with the previous generation. Only a partial experience of transformational learning was seen from these women, the final part. A strong maternal influence led to the indoctrination of lifelong values and beliefs, consistent with a process in which mothers and grandmothers had begun but were unable to complete. This intergenerational transformative learning process passed down to the next generation which led to upward socioeconomic mobility and a decline of the poverty cycle in each of their lives. The direct impact from this is they began to see that their preconceived notions of limited opportunities were based on situational or environmental circumstances and not based on their potential. From the findings, a model was developed consisting of the four interrelated themes related to achievement of mobility, each necessary but not sufficient for the process to complete.

Combinations of interdependent factors influenced these African American women to move beyond their existing poverty and achieve socioeconomic mobility. A transformative learning theme forming the early foundation of inculcated beliefs and opportunities taught the participants how to move forward. These beliefs and opportunities that the participants' embraced were predominantly received from the mother or another maternal influence. As the primary sphere of influence, their foundation of principles and beliefs ignited the desire in these women to become someone special. All of the participants received support, encouragement, praise, opportunities for growth, and ongoing feedback through these figureheads. The feedback given suggests that the maternal figures, mentors, teachers, and employers exposed the women to other alternatives and potential paths to success.

The mothers conveyed a message of opportunity and responsibility. Each participant recognized through their influences, particularly their mothers, the significance of becoming responsible for their life and the choices they made. Thus, with early preparation and exposure, they began to develop a sense of self-control and the need to become responsible for their future success. There was an increase in competency that resulted from influences and opportunities they experienced in both familial and social contexts.

Conclusions

Given the technological, globalization, and second information-age paradigms shifts, the actions taken by organizations will determine their level of competency and resource capabilities to compete in the 21st century. This is essential given the increase of women and minorities in the workplace, government initiatives to get the welfare population back into the workforce, and the shrinkage of the White male population. Many workers available to enter the workforce lack the skills necessary to be productive and efficient workers. Consequently, employers and HRD practitioners will be mandated to set up new policies and procedures for hiring people from this population. Some will be entering the job market for the first time. Also, they must create an atmosphere that will promote an organizational culture conducive of maximizing the potential this population to remain competitive. Rather than emphasize "deficits in women" living under poverty stricken conditions, emphasis should be placed upon the deficits existing in organizations (Piotrkowski and Kessler-Sklar, 1996). Organizations should design experiences to raise the competency and commitment level plus instill in dependents from poverty-based existence a desire to become independent and active participants in their socioeconomic mobility. Work experiences should lead to desires and expectations of a different future. This reality can come, as it was with the study participants, from early preparation, by the organization through changes in their policies, recruitment standards and procedures to train, educate, and develop workers upon entry into the workplace. Learning experiences designed to increase motivation, self-esteem, and guiding this special population through the change is paramount to the transition. Setting up new policies and procedures for this special population would be the beginning of the workplace transformational learning process--the foundation of guiding principles that could contribute to ending dependent poverty-based existence for women and other minorities.

In this research, the expectation of others and their desire to achieve became the driving force behind the participants' ability to experience upward mobility. An interdependence of organizational beliefs and

values; socioeconomic mobility experiences; influences of others with respect to co-workers, peers, supervisors; and a productive self-perspective, are all critical aspects of the transformation process that could ultimately lead welfare poverty-based dependent recipients to active independent, and motivated achievers exercising control over their socioeconomic mobility. The process would address these elements: (1) early preparation and mother's influence, (2) locus of control and self-perception, (3) reflective insight and transitional experiences (turning point), (4) refocus and reaffirm prior goals, (5) ongoing reinforcement, encouragement, support, praise, (6) setbacks and delayed gratification, (7) back to basics (revisit early foundation of principles and purpose), (8) internal and external motivation, and (9) the results and benefits (consequences). For work related experiences, there must be in place purposeful, goal-oriented strategies to prepare this population with more rewarding future opportunities that could advance their socioeconomic status as working adults. The consequences of their action and interactional strategies taken create experiences where they can realize socioeconomic mobility.

Implications and Recommendations

Tavris (1992) suggest that " . . . the way we label and explain our problem is important because the explanation that women choose to account for their difficulties lead to different courses of action" (p. 128). Equally important is the knowledge gained from the experiences of other women that might provide a vision of past and future possibilities. Many women and minorities, particularly African American women, remain on welfare and in abject poverty. Hearing the experiences of other women could possibly raise their level of self-esteem to the extent that they may believe more strongly in themselves and their ability to achieve success. The findings provide insight into the background of African American women, in which the transformative learning process enabled them to surpass their welfare status and other levels of poverty and the process by which they experienced a transformation.

This study represents an examination of transformative learning as it applies, in particular, to the early life experiences of African American women who achieved mobility despite their circumstances. It addresses the issue of how women approach impoverished conditions and their individual process of changing their life's circumstances. It gives a description for how their success accounts for a change in their world perspective in which they realized the possibility of being able to achieve a higher standard of living beyond that of their youth.

From an HRD perspective, this research informs practice by identifying issues and suggesting interventions that can be used while working with people to promote their advancement in society. An examination of women and other minorities growing out of poverty addresses issues relative to the welfare reform initiative. With the current government's plan, most people on welfare will be denied benefits after a period of two years unless they are actively seeking employment. Two to three years after the employment seeking opportunity, they will be denied benefits altogether. To help this population enter the workforce (some for the first time) the government will give employers a tax credit for employees that they have hired off welfare and who remain employed for at least one year. It would be to their advantage here to help employees become productive members of their workforce through the establishment of organizational policies. The policies would specifically address the behavioral skills, knowledge, and attitude needs of this population to increase the possibility of them becoming lifelong productive and committed employees in the workplace. Organizations should address any identified barriers to these workers and strategically plan to eliminate them. All of the participants experienced this process of mobility and transformation despite the character of poverty experienced. How the welfare cycle can be broken, from a learning perspective, makes this study informative. It is important for organizations and HRD from a policy perspective given the: shrinking labor force, government tax incentive to employers, people who are convinced they are not employable, and next generation of family/friendly workplace which is causing some positive notoriety with organizations that have good policies related to family.

Programs that increase the awareness of barriers and lack of initiative are just as important as having policies and procedures in place that create avenues of change. According to Vobejda (1996), many welfare recipients will encounter difficulties transitioning into the workforce as the new welfare-to-work law forces this population back to work. Policies designed to assists both the employee and organization to persevere during these challenges may offer a more promising means of entry into the workforce and maintaining employment. The role of organizations in initiating policies and procedures that address

expected difficulties of this new population to the workforce may be a starting point to their entry and subsequent success. With government initiatives that have the potential to change this growing underclass of women and other minorities, these initiatives may be the minimal requisite level of economic opportunities that this population needs to succeed. Organizations may find an advantage in developing policies in fostering improvement in the pool of available employees such as poverty-based welfare dependents.

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